<u>**In the Claims**</u>

1. (Currently amended) A method of correlating a purchaser of an electronically-purchased item ("EPI") with the EPI, said EPI to be subsequently received by said purchaser, comprising:

a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial information is transferred to a seller of said EPI and verification-related digital certificate information is transferred from said seller to said purchaser<u>, said verification-related digital certificate information containing no access to purchaser-related financial information</u>; and

a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said EPI are correlated by requiring said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before receiving said EPI and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital certificate information with said EPI.

2. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said purchasing step includes at least the steps of:

creating an electronically-readable indicia corresponding to said verification-related digital certificate information; and

associating said electronically-readable indicia with said EPI.

3. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said verification step comprises:

electronically reading said verification-related digital certificate information from said

electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to receiving said EPI; and

comparing said read verification-related digital certificate information with

verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to receive

the EPI.

4. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 3, wherein the EPI is authorized to be

released to said person attempting to receive the EPI only after the EPI is confirmed to have

associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding to the

verification-related digital certificate information provided by said receiving party.

5. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related

digital certificate information comprises a self-signed certificate generated by said seller.

6. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related

digital certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said

EPI.

7. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related

digital certificate information comprises a self-signed certificate generated by said seller and a

data file containing data pertaining to said EPI.

8. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related

digital certificate information is generated by a server under the control of the seller and is

stored on a smart card.

9. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related

digital certificate information is generated by a server under the control of the seller and is

stored on a PDA.

10. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related

digital certificate information is generated by a server under the control of the seller and is

stored on a cellular telephone.

11. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said electronically-readable

indicia comprises bar coding.

12. (Currently amended) A method of correlating a purchased redeemable ticket with

the purchaser of the redeemable ticket, comprising:

a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial information is transferred to a

seller of said redeemable ticket and verification-related digital certificate information is

transferred to said purchaser, said verification-related digital certificate information containing

no access to purchaser-related financial information; and

a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said redeemable ticket are correlated by

requiring said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information

before receiving said redeemable ticket and by electronically comparing said

verification-related digital certificate information with said redeemable ticket.

13. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 12, wherein said purchasing step

includes at least the steps of:

creating an electronically-readable indicia corresponding to said verification-related

digital certificate information; and

associating said electronically-readable indicia with said redeemable ticket.

14. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said verification step

comprises:

electronically reading said verification-related digital certificate information from said

electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to receiving said redeemable

ticket; and

comparing said read verification-related digital certificate information with

verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to receive

the redeemable ticket.

15. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 14, wherein the redeemable ticket is authorized to be released to said person attempting to receive the redeemable ticket only after the redeemable ticket is confirmed to have associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding to the verification-related digital certificate information provided by said receiving party.

16. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises a self-signed certificate generated by said seller.

17. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said redeemable ticket.

18. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises a self-signed certificate generated by said seller and a data file containing data pertaining to said redeemable ticket.

19. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information is generated by a server under the control of the seller and is stored on a smart card.

20. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information is generated by a server under the control of the seller and is stored on a PDA.

21. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information is generated by a server under the control of the seller and is stored on a cellular telephone.

22. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said electronically-readable indicia comprises bar coding.